THE TRUTH ABOUT ESSENTIAL OILS AND PETS

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Real Talk. There is some pretty scary (and controversial) stuff about essential oils and pets on the internet these days. In the age of viral posts and everyone getting their five minutes of fame, Dr. Google isn’t actually the best source to get your information. In fact, whether your dog gets stressed out during thunderstorms or your cat could benefit from some digestive support, using essential oils as part of a well-rounded health program can actually help your pets thrive and live the best possible life.

Before using any product with or around your pet, it is important to note that not all essential oils are created equal. Many essential oils on the market may boast “100 percent pure” on the label, but they could contain substances that are actually quite toxic to animals and should be avoided. This is also true with many candles, wax melts, air fresheners, cleaning solutions and fabric refreshers. To ensure the highest quality products, be sure your essential oils are third party tested and CPTG Certified Pure Therapeutic Grade®.

Let’s demystifysome of the myths, and learn the truth about essential oils and pets.
MYTH: Diffusing around pets is toxic.

TRUTH: An essential oil is a highly concentrated, aromatic compound distilled from a plant. Because of this, essential oils are quite potent. Pets have millions more olfactory receptors than humans do, which does make them sensitive to strong smells, but they are certainly not toxic. The truth is, diffusing around pets is an excellent way to benefit them on a regular basis. It is best to use a water-based diffuser (such as the Lumo® Diffuser) on an intermittent setting. Allow the pet the option to exit the room by leaving the door open and only use three to four drops of oil at a time in the diffuser. Diffusing Lavender has been shown in shelters to provide calming effects for pets.

MYTH: Never pet your dog or cat after using oils.

TRUTH: Petting is actually an excellent way to apply oils topically to pets. Along the spine or on the ear tips are the most common applications. Here is the issue behind this myth: after using oils like Peppermint, Deep Blue®, or others, the oil smell can linger on your hands. I'm sure I'm not the only one that has rubbed my eyes after applying Peppermint—Ouch! The same holds true for your pets. Any residue from your hands can have the same effect on them that it would on you.

Essential oils are volatile, which means they dissipate into the air rapidly, and they absorb into the skin quickly. This means they won’t stick around for very long. If you are worried though, washing your hands after using oils and prior to petting your pets is an option.

MYTH: Using oils around pets can cause liver or kidney damage.

TRUTH: When using CPTG Certified Pure Therapeutic Grade® Essential Oils, we have seen certain oils that can be used to actually support the kidneys or liver. Many of these accusations come from the fact that liver and kidney failure are common in pets, regardless of essential oil use. Many times people want a reason for why these things happen, and often oils get implicated falsely.

MYTH: If my pet gets too much oil, they will die.

TRUTH: This is extremely rare, and most adverse reactions are due to a significant amount of essential oil (two bottles undiluted, for example) being used or consumed. However, anyone who has rushed their dog to the vet after they ate an entire chocolate cake when no one was looking knows that accidents can happen. In the event of an adverse reaction, dilute with a carrier oil—skin irritation is the most common, and most reactions resolve within 24-48 hours after oil exposure. Discontinue use of an oil if your pet shows signs of distress, drooling, squinting, rubbing their face, vocalization, shaking, vomiting, or diarrhea. Seek veterinary attention if significant. Keep the lids on your bottles and store them in a safe place such as a closed box to prevent your pets from “borrowing” one of your oils.

MYTH: [Insert oil name here] oil is harmful to cats.

TRUTH: I have heard it all. Citrus oils are toxic to cats. Pine oils are toxic to cats. Even Lavender oil is toxic to cats. You name it. The truth is, there is just no sound science or basis for these claims. Ultimately, you will hear many things from many people about cats and oils. Here’s my take: cats lack a liver enzyme that is important for metabolizing certain things, so it really isn’t a bad idea to use a bit more caution with these little ones. If you use the cautions already recommended, these oils are perfectly safe to use in your DIY cleaning or diffused in your home with cats. Use a little extra caution with Melaleuca, Birch, Wintergreen, Spearmint, and Peppermint, as well as hot oils such as Oregano or Thyme.

Essential oils have many benefits for your pets. They can help with calming emotions, soothing muscles, easing digestion, and overall wellness of your four-legged family members.

As with any new thing you introduce to your pet, begin slowly. Start with a small amount of a diffused or diluted essential oil and observe your pet’s behavior. Keep your diffusers in a safe place where your pet cannot knock it over.